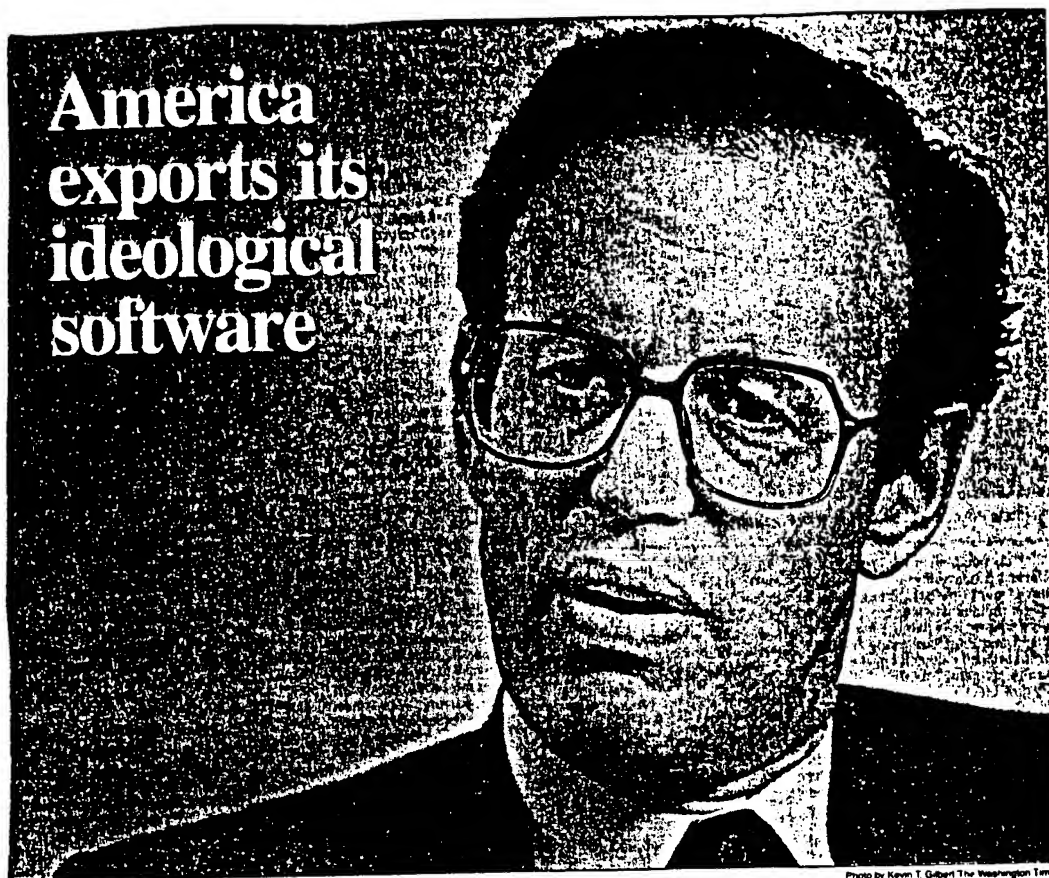


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ON PAGE 1-B

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Carl Gershman, president of the National Endowment for Democracy, which was created by Congress to spread democratic ideas and values abroad.

By Kathleen Tyman
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

In Nicaragua, the independent newspaper La Prensa is having difficulty getting the government to sell or give it newsprint and other supplies necessary to the task of putting out a daily newspaper.

In South Africa, black and multiracial trade unions struggle to improve working conditions and assert themselves politically. In Afghanistan, a group of French doctors attempt to establish elementary and secondary schools for children

deprived of education in areas of the country not under Soviet control.

American tax monies are going to assist these three foreign groups. They are helping to purchase supplies for La Prensa; to create an International Metalworkers Affiliates Council in South Africa; and to pay teachers' salaries, refurbish buildings, and purchase textbooks for Afghanistan.

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A U.S.-based organization, Friends of the Democratic Center in Central America, administers the NED grant, purchasing supplies in Miami and sending them to Nicaragua. Mary Temple, executive direc-

tor of the U.S. group, says there has been no reaction from the government so far to this arrangement. From a former editor of the paper, Pedro Joaquim Chamorro (who fled recently to Costa Rica), Mrs. Temple has heard that the newspaper is about 85 percent censored.

Adriana Guillen is a free-lance writer in Washington. She was once a Sandinista official and then, after quitting her post in disillusionment, a reporter for La Prensa. She left her country under accusations of being a counterrevolutionary. She says the paper has managed to survive with subsidies from West Germany and Argentina, both countries which maintain diplomatic relations with Nicaragua and which have made loans to the Sandinista government. Receiving American money will certainly bring accusations of a CIA link, Mrs. Guillen says, but that is nothing new.

"The paper has been accused of being a CIA tool since the original Sandinista boycott against it in 1980," she says. "This is the first time an American donation is going to La Prensa. I will not say this will harm them more than it will help. In Nica-

ragua, if you do something [political] you will be in danger of being accused. If you don't, you also will be in danger. The people at La Prensa know the risk they are taking, but the only option will be to exile themselves and say there is not any more room there to work. They have not yet reached that point. If institutions like NED are willing to respond to them, it gives them some kind of international visibility and support. If nobody knows what's going on, they are nothing."

Supporting labor unions and business associations is a major priority at NED. More than half of the \$18 million first year endowment went to support developing trade unions in other countries, channeled through the AFL-CIO's Free Trade Union Institute (FTUI).

"We had extensive operations in the field already and a lot of experience with this kind of work," says Eugenia Kemble, executive director of the FTUI, explaining why the labor organization was so chosen. "The AFL-CIO has been training labor leaders in Latin America, Africa and Asia for over 20 years. We were most quickly able to get into action."

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